

**FREDERICK COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
November 19, 2007**

Members:

Suzan M. Adams
William P. Allen, PhD
Earl S. Beck, PhD
Mary S. Bevard-Cline, Rec. Sec.
Rae Ann Butler
Harold A. Ehart, Jr., Chair
Judy Hallman, Vice Chair
Lloyd Hoover
Louise Lynch
Burt Shawver
Susan Shelton
Anna Mary Snyder
Carolyn True

Excused

Alan Imhoff, Alderman
Charles A. Jenkins,
Comm.
Ona M. John Kile

Unexcused:

Bernice Sewell

Guests:

Carol Haag, RSVP
Nena Tierney
Emily Kilby

- I. **Call to Order** – Hal Ehart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.
- II. **Welcome & Introductions** – Hal Ehart welcomed all attendees and introductions/affiliations were made.
- III. **Approval of Minutes** – The minutes of the October 15, 2007 meeting were approved on a motion by Pete Allen and seconded by Rae Ann Butler. All were in favor.
- IV. **Commissioner's Comments** – No report.
Review of Senior Voices Survey, 2004 – Hal Ehart requested Louise Lynch and Carolyn True to provide an overview of the 2004 survey. Carolyn indicated the "Senior Voices" is a project of the Frederick County Commission on Aging (CoA), the Institute for Learning in Retirement at Frederick Community College, the Frederick County Senior Recreation Council, and Most Magazine. The assessment gathered information through voluntary participation of senior citizens in an opinion survey. A total of 1,250 senior citizens over age 50 completed the survey. Louise Lynch indicated that she and Collier Baird put together a memo on June 7, 2007 in regards to the DoA written report of outcomes. Suzan Adams indicated that the top 4 items are to 1) provide a property tax break, 2) improve area roads, 3) improve transportation, and 4) provide a tax credit for seniors whose spouses are in an assisted living facility. We are working on providing affordable, independent senior living. Accessible health care is going to be worked on.

The BOCC Strategic Plan/Goal requested a needs assessment be completed of the older population by 2010. Carolyn True indicated that internal meetings are underway and outside resources will be needed. We are looking at how we compare to other DoA's and are there any differences to those counties. We need to look at what do we need in the future. This is going to be a long-term process. It was noted that some of the items have been completed.

V. Overview of Partners in Care Program –

- Emily provided an overview of the process in that in-home interviews are completed to determine the client's needs. She currently has 75 new recipients being served by 35 volunteers. Some of the services provided are transportation to/from doctor appointments, grocery shopping, hair appointments, general shopping expeditions, and small handyman jobs. She would like to be able to provide yard work such as raking leaves, trimming bushes, and cleaning out rainspouts. Volunteers range from 30 years old to senior citizens. Most of the volunteers are from Frederick City and there is a need to grow the volunteer base to outlying areas in the Jefferson, Johnsville, Middleton, Rocky Ridge, and Thurmont areas. There are a few clients in these areas that are receiving transportation services and many more must need some services. The volunteer drivers give their time, use of their personal vehicle and cost of gasoline to the cause of this program. They can request gas mileage reimbursement when they drive 75 miles or more per month but most never ask for anything. There are no client financial restrictions in order to qualify for this service. But, as any business, it takes money to operate and funds come from donations and grants. Two volunteers received a \$10K endowment from the Community Foundation of Frederick County's Wertheimer Fund from which annual interest will be paid to the program. Partners in Care has also received a senior demonstration grant from the MD Department of Transportation, a portion of which will provide a salaried coordinators position for Frederick County. Emily indicated a VISTA grant would then be used for a second staff member in Frederick. Emily reiterated we are not equipped to transport wheelchair bound clients, which fall in a high-risk category. The client must be mentally alert and able to take care of personal business. Clients must be 55 and older unless they are physically disabled in which they would be qualified. Emily indicated that all volunteers must have a clean driving record, pass a background check and attend an orientation program. The volunteers indicate their availability, i.e. a specific day or time of the week. Then they are matched to the needs of our clients. A question was raised in how to go about getting Thurmont citizens to help with the Partners in Care Program. Emily expressed a desire to have a facilitator for this area who would be willing to report to the Frederick Senior Center weekly to discuss the client needs and assist with matching volunteers to clients in this area. It was recommended information regarding the Partners in Care program be posted in doctor and dental offices. Commissioner Kai Hagen recommended an excellent avenue of getting this message out to the public is to make a presentation such as was given today at the town Board of Commissioners and Mayor meetings as they are televised.
- At this time Mr. Ehart opened the meeting for general comments. It was also recommended flexing bus times so more seniors could stay to attend meetings at the Thurmont Senior Center. There was a group of seniors that really wanted to stay to attend today's meeting but could not because of the departure time. The CoA Chairperson and the Director of DoA, reiterated the importance of letters of recommendation advocating for the senior needs of the community. We need to elevate awareness to increase our needs in the process of priorities. Louise Lynch recommended the CoA make a written recommendation to the BOCC.

VI. **Nominations Committee Report** – Dr. Earl Beck indicated that they are awaiting the receipt of 4 resumes, which will then need to be approved by the BoCC. It was recommended that the committee actively seek potential new members by developing a waiting list of possible candidates who would be available to step into a vacancy immediately. Kai Hagen reiterated that we will still need to advertise with each vacancy to ensure any new persons interested have an opportunity to apply. He recommended that we maintain all résumé's on file so that they would not have to re-submit a resume. Hal Ehart reminded Dr. Beck that the Chair and Vice-Chair positions would need to be filled by January 2008 as both these terms expire 12-31-07.

VII. **Director's Report** –

- Carolyn indicated that we have an intern from FCC who is studying Gerontology. She will be working at the Thurmont Senior Center 10 hours per week starting in January 2008.
- The Medicare Part D enrollment began November 15, 2007 to years end. Appointments are on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays. Schedule will be expanded if needed.
- Carolyn indicated that the "Seniors Resource Center" that opened on Market Street is not affiliated with the Department of Aging. They are not a 501(3) (C) non-profit organization. They are a 501(C) (4) lobbying organization. They are not soliciting in MD due to legalities. There was a senior that called our office last week because the center was closed at 2:00 pm and he wanted to know why. Carolyn explained there is not affiliation with this organization.

VIII. **Open Subjects** –

Clarification was requested of the responsibilities of the Commission on Aging. Carolyn True indicated that the Commission on Aging (CoA) advises the Department of Aging (DoA) and the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The CoA has a wide network and can be the eyes and ears for the DoA. The CoA addresses the needs of seniors and what services the DoA can provide and what funds are available to support various programs. Ten years ago the CoA became an advisory to the BoCC. The DoA carries out the functions of the department. They are two separate entities. The CoA consists of 15 voting members.

Bob Lookingbill thanked the CoA for coming to the Thurmont Senior Center for lunch and inviting seniors to be a part of the commission meeting today. He reiterated that if there is something the Thurmont government can do to help, that is his desire.

Kai Hagen indicated he is interested in improvements in regard to adequacy of this facility, expansion, remodel, merge or relocate.

Carol Haag indicated that she has several volunteers to assist with the Medicare Part D registration. She also indicated that volunteer, Bob Francis, works for RSVP, Mission of Mercy, Habitat for Humanity and is now working out of the Frederick Senior Center with answering phones for the MOW program.

Several seniors in attendance expressed concern regarding the new Urbana Senior Center stating it was an error in building at that location and a new center should

have been built in Thurmont. The idea that "if we build it, they will come" was a bad decision because the seniors are not coming as thought. The staffing level at Urbana was questioned. Carolyn True indicated that there are 2 staff members in Urbana, this center has been in operation for 1 year and it is difficult to determine the success in such a short period of time. There are several languages (10 each) that are spoken at this center creating a very unique communication problem. One of the employees has and continues to float to other centers as needed. The area is growing tremendously and the center will grow as the community develops.

Other concerns expressed by Thurmont participants were:

- Repairs are needed to the kitchen equipment, i.e. dishwasher, lack of adequate cabinets and storage, sinks are too high to reach resulting in lost volunteers, the steam table needs repair as it shuts off intermittingly. This equipment was purchased second hand and why do we always have to settle for second hand.
- The restrooms are a disgrace and there are not enough available at this center. It was question why the Thurmont Senior Center is not as important as other centers, why aren't the seniors treated the same as seniors at other sites.
- They are tired of hearing this is a town owned center, we do not have a lease on this building and could be thrown out tomorrow, what are we qualified for in this setting? It was noted that, at one time, the Thurmont Senior Center board was responsible for interior maintenance and the town was responsible for the exterior maintenance. The lease lapsed in July 2007 with the Senior Center and the town. This item needs to be addressed.
- The Health Department stopped potluck dinners due to health concerns.
- It is time to make some noise and get some help at this center in meeting the need of the seniors at this location.

Carolyn thanked everyone for expressing their concerns and encourage advocacy for these causes. It will carry more weight coming from the seniors in lieu of staff members. She applauded them for speaking up. It was noted that the county does pay the electric, water & sewer costs, and computer costs. Hal Ehart recommended the development of a committee from the Thurmont Senior Center to advocate these needs. This process must happen in order to effect change.

Bob Lookingbill indicated several of these items of concern are in the workings. He questioned why these items were not on the master list that was submitted? Sylvia Goodenough stated they are afraid to ask for too much at once. Bob requested that, in the future, they provide an all-inclusive list of needed items so that priority decisions can be made. Without having access to the big picture, it is impossible for the town to make adequate decisions. He reiterated that there should not be an assumption that "you're not going to get what you asked for because it seems you are asking for too much."

Rae Ann Butler questioned if there is a work order request system in place to request needed repairs. It was acknowledged that there is such a system and that these repairs must be reported by the Program Coordinator for corrective actions to be taken.

Louise Lynch indicated she is willing to do a weekly column/page in the "Gazette" based on what is going on in the senior community and what some of the needs are. We would have to write the articles. We can invite the editor to come to the December meeting.

Rae Ann Butler indicated that the Edenton sponsored cookbooks that benefit the Meals on Wheels program would be available in approximately 2 weeks. There was a delay due to advertising layouts. Edenton underwrote the publishing costs through advertisements. Cookbooks will be on sale for \$11.00 each.

Carol Haag questioned the strategic plan being rolled into the BoCC plan? It was noted that the CoA could still embark on their own.

Hal Ehart announced Louise Lynch's appointment to the State of MD Commission on Aging.

It was noted that there is a CoA Executive Meeting on Tuesday, November 27, 2007 at 10:30 am at the Frederick County Senior Center.

IX. **Adjournment** – The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary S. Bevard-Cline,
Recording Secretary

NEXT MEETING: December 10, 2007, 1:00 pm at the Frederick Senior Center, 1440 Taney Avenue, Frederick, MD 21702.